

Workforce Board

Electronic Newsletter

From the desk of Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Executive Director
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Luncheon Speaker Announced for Workforce Strategies 2005: Partnering for Strong Communities

Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, the Study Director for Poverty and Welfare Programs at the Institute for Women's Policy Research, is the luncheon speaker on October 25 at Workforce Strategies 2005. An engaging speaker, Dr. Jones-DeWeever received her doctoral degree in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland where she specialized in public policy and the politics of race. Her areas of expertise include poverty in urban communities, ensuring educational opportunity, and the impact of welfare reform.

Joining Dr. Jones-DeWeever for the three-day leadership event (October 24-26, 2005 at the WestCoast Ridpath Hotel in Spokane) will be a host of speakers from around the state and across the country. Topics cover the policy and program links between economic development, workforce development, and poverty reduction. From the National Association of Manufacturers, Phyllis Eisen will lead a panel of D.C. insiders on 'Policy Issues on the Horizon,' while Jack Mills, National Economic Development and Law Center; David Cleveland, Kansas State Department of Commerce; and Claire Berger, Office of Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, will share their insights on "Aligning Workforce and Economic Development – Innovations From Other States."

Workforce Strategies is the state's premier event for public and private sector workforce development leaders, and annually draws more than 500 attendees from business,

government, labor, education, community and technical colleges and private career schools, workforce programs, and legislators.

Now in its fifth year, the leadership conference is hosted by the Workforce Board, with additional sponsorship this year from Clark College and the Association of Washington Business. Conference Patrons include the Employment Security Department, Department of Social and Health Services – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; with Contributions from Bellevue Community College, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Olympic College, and Shoreline Community College; and Donations from the Department of Services for the Blind and Grays Harbor College.

More details about the conference, as well as two pre-conference events, hotel accommodation, and online registration are available at www.wtb.wa.gov.

Washington Learns Up and Meeting

Washington Learns-the Steering Committee established by Senate Bill 5441 by Governor Christine Gregoire to identify inefficiencies and gaps in the current education system, define a high-performing education system, and determine what resources are needed to provide that system-held its first advisory committee meetings earlier this month.

At each meeting, Early Learning, K-12, and Higher Education advisory committee members heard an overview of the current education system and discussed committee organization, expectations, and first steps.

In the K-12 subcommittee, members will look critically at the issues affecting students, such as transitions-young children into kindergarten and high school students for post-secondary high school options. Topics to be covered could include a new definition of education for the 21st Century, a look at the states that are getting good results for the money they are investing, and an examination of incentives for attracting quality teachers to shortage areas. Equally, they will look at developing partnerships with parents and the community, increasing guidance counseling, and helping at-risk and gifted students meet their potential.

Issues for the Higher Education subcommittee during the coming 16 months will focus on demographic issues (access for immigrant populations, retention in programs, etc.), identifying expectations for an educated state, considering various methods of delivery including distance learning, and ways to provide incentives to students to enter fields that the state needs (e.g. health care, engineering, education, and fields in demand).

The next meetings for both advisory committees are September 14; they are open to the public. For more information on Washington Learns, its members, or meeting logistics, go to www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov.

Snohomish County Program Wins National Recognition

Snohomish County's Project REACH program received a Recognition of Excellence

award from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration at its recent national workforce development conference. The program was honorably mentioned for its “innovative techniques and collaboration with business, industry, and essential partners in workforce and economic development to solve the education, training and hiring challenges of serving out-of-school young adults.”

More than 100 applied for the 15 awards which include one winner and two honorable mentions in five different categories.

Operated by a partnership led by Superior Court of Snohomish County Juvenile Court, Project REACH works to assure the successful reentry of young offenders into their community. Since 2003, through an array of pre-release and intensive aftercare services, it has served 179 youth and young adults, ages 14 through 24, who have been court ordered to participate in a chemical abuse/dependency treatment program. To date, the program reports a 6.1 percent recidivism rate (well below the national average for this population), 77.8 percent placement rate, and 100 percent participation rate.

For more details about the award and the program, contact Mary Jane Vujovic, 425.921.3405, maryjane@snocowdc.org.

The “Original Four-Year Degree” Holds Steady

The interest in apprenticeship, “the original four-year degree,” remains steady according to the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council’s 2004 annual report. Last year, the state had more than 13,000 registered apprentices, up considerably from 9,000 in 1996.

The report also notes:

- o The median wage for all program participants in Washington was \$32,420 per annum, while those completing their journey-level certificate earn a median wage of \$50,599 per year.
- o Apprenticeship now covers 609 occupations from the traditional building and construction trades to the more ‘cutting edge’ ones in magnetic resonance imaging, child care, and dispensing opticians.
- o Over 43,700 employers provide paid on-the-job training.
- o Business investment in just 37 apprenticeship programs alone totals more than \$21 million.
- o The state investment for apprenticeship is only 1/12 of 1 percent of the workforce development system budget.

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A copy of the latest annual report, as well as previous ones, is available at www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/WSATC/AnnualReports/Default.asp.

Briefly

Celebrate National Construction Week in October

The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) is having its first Careers in Construction Week October 17-21. To create awareness about careers in

construction, the group has an array of promotional materials available, such as posters, media tips, sample press releases, a comprehensive DVD of career image videos, and a Careers in Construction planning guide. All items are free to contractors, schools, and associations. Download them at www.nccer.org. For additional information, you might also contact the NCCER at 1.888.622.3720.

Learn More About Funding for Biomed Projects

Did you know that federal agencies spend over \$2 billion annually in research and development for life sciences? Don't be left out! Attend the Pacific Northwest Biomedical and Life Sciences Summit at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane on October 7, and learn what the feds look for in award-winning biomed grants and how to leverage funding for your own efforts. Sign up by August 31 at www.sirti.org/events/pacific-northwest-biomedicine-life-sciences-summit, and the full-day meeting will only cost \$99.

Central's Block Program Helps Plan 2 Teachers

Central Washington University (CWU) is once again offering Plan 2 career and technical education teachers an opportunity to help them more successfully transition from the world of work to that of the classroom. Designed for working teachers, CWU's Competency Block program provides a foundation in teaching methods, classroom management, assessment, leadership, and educational technology. Classes are held one Saturday a month between September and May in Renton, Stanwood, Kennewick or Wenatchee. For more details, contact Sandra Bach, 800.720.4503.

SunBridge Apprenticeship Program Receives Praise

The SunBridge Restorative Aide Apprenticeship program should go nationwide!

So enthused was Kathleen Chatwood, a program reviewer conducting the statewide apprenticeship training implementation review, that she said the Restorative Aide Apprenticeship pilot "could be expanded into other states where they (SunBridge) operate other long-term care facilities. I have reviewed a lot of pilot programs in my experience, and normally we hope to learn from program failures. It is rare to find a functional and productive pilot program" such as that at SunBridge. The Restorative Aide Apprenticeship program is a bridge for entry level staff to obtain better positions in nursing homes.

HECB Seeks Input on Higher Education Needs in North Puget Sound

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will convene a 13-member regional advisory committee of business, education, and government leaders on September 7 at Everett Community College to begin a study of higher education needs in Snohomish, Island and Skagit Counties. The meeting is open to the public, and will take place from 1:30PM to 4PM at the college. The 2005-2007 state capital budget directs the HECB to evaluate ways to best fulfill the higher education and workforce training needs in the tri-county area and to recommend solutions. An interim report is due by January 15, 2006 and a final version by December 1, 2006.

Census Bureau Updates Industry Analytic Tools

The U.S. Census Bureau has added a new analytic tool called "Industry Focus" to its Local Employment Dynamics (LED) website to replace "Local Workforce" and "Top Industries." To access the new tools, go to: <http://lehd.dsd.census.gov/led/index.html>.

Upcoming Events

October 24-26: The Workforce Board's annual Workforce Strategies conference takes

place at the WestCoast Ridpath Hotel in Spokane. Register online at www.showworksinc.com/WFReg_form_05.html.

November 2-5: The National Network of Sector Partners' national conference will take place at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. For more information, contact Kaitlin McNally-Murphy at 510.251.2600, ext. 130, kaitlin@nedlc.org.

November 14-15: Circle those dates for the 2005 It's My Life conference taking place in Baltimore, MD. The conference targets those who guide transition services for young people who 'age out' of foster care. Online registration is restricted to the first 600 registrants. More details are available from Tina Janek at 512.327.9507, tina@tinajaneck.com

November 16-19: The Washington State School Directors' annual conference is scheduled at the Westin Hotel in Seattle. The conference will have a new format this year, and will include a number of breakout sessions with topics ranging from small schools to nutrition and diversity. To register online, go to <http://wssda.org/wssda/WebForms/En-Us/AnnualConference/RegandHotelIntro.asp>.